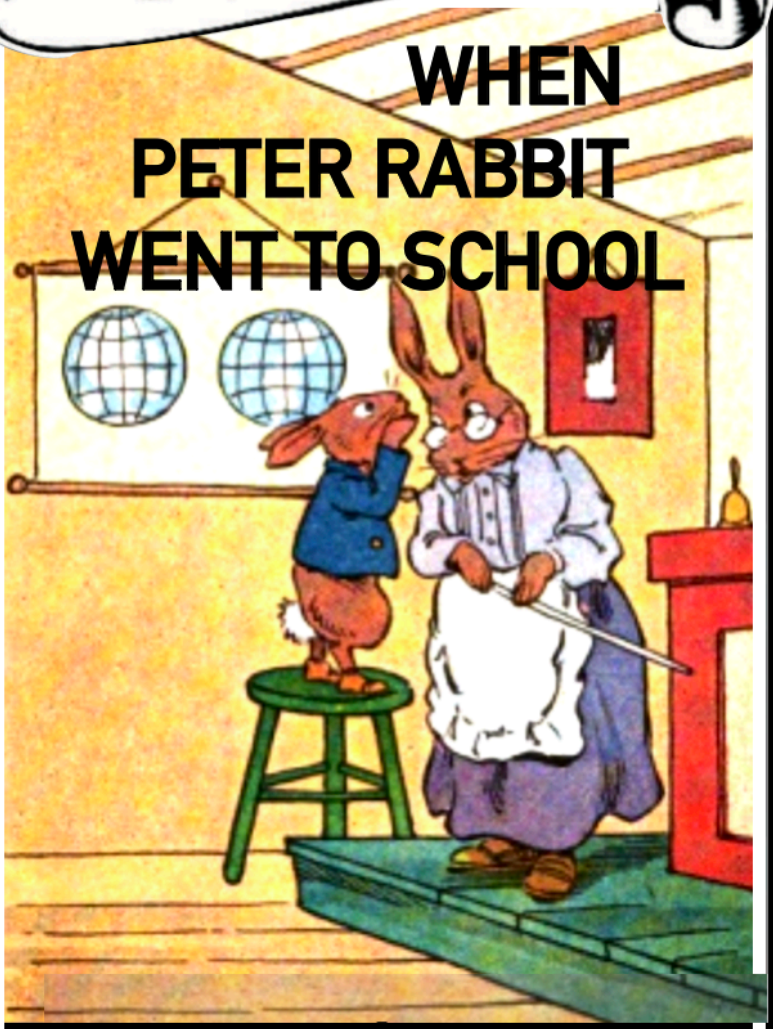
Gunston Classics

WHEN PETER RABBIT WENT TO SCHOOL



Linda S. Almond

WHEN PETER RABBIT WENT TO SCHOOL

By Linda S. Almond
Illustrated By J. L. Gallagher

SECOND EDITION

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Gunston & The Book Bunnies

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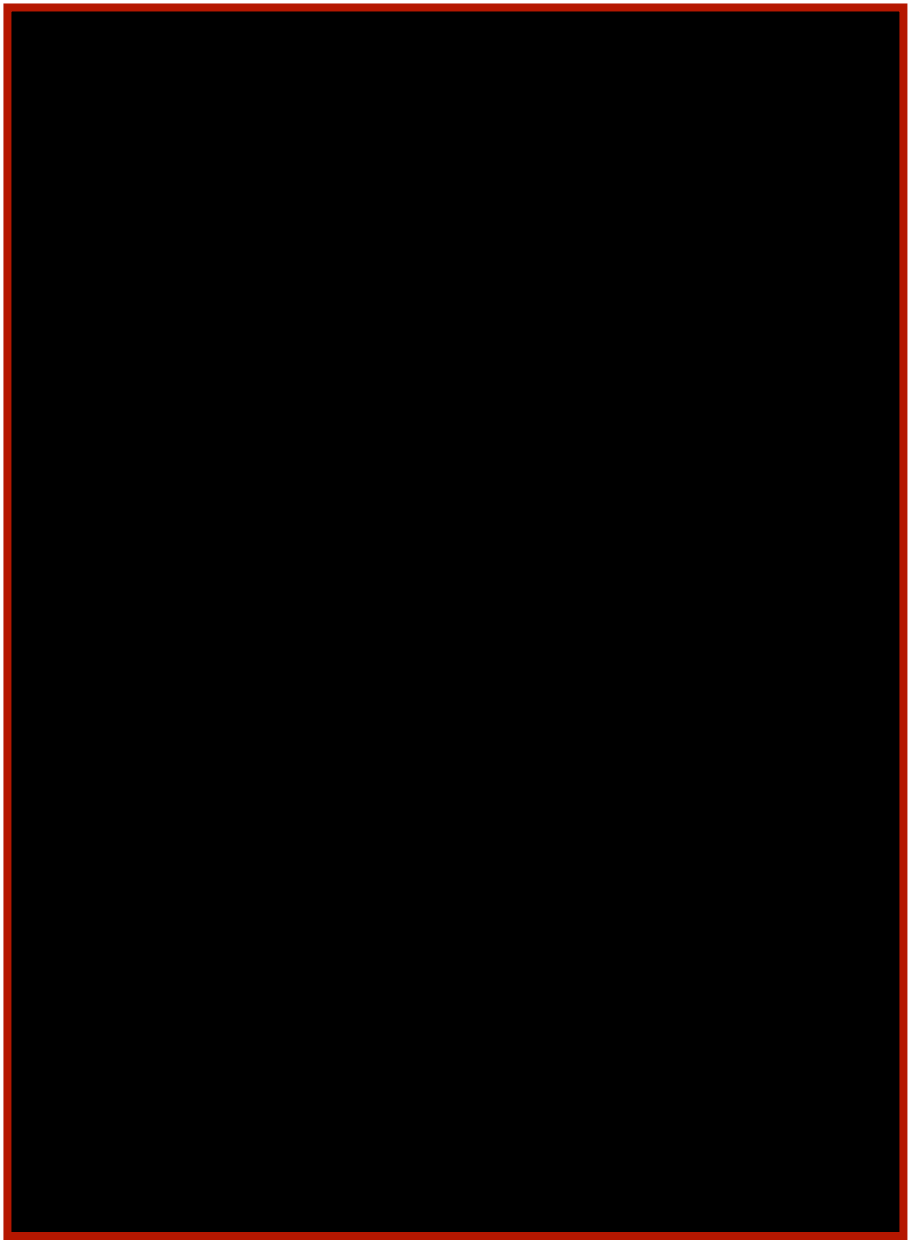
WHEN PETER RABBIT WENT TO SCHOOL



Gunston & The Book Bunnies

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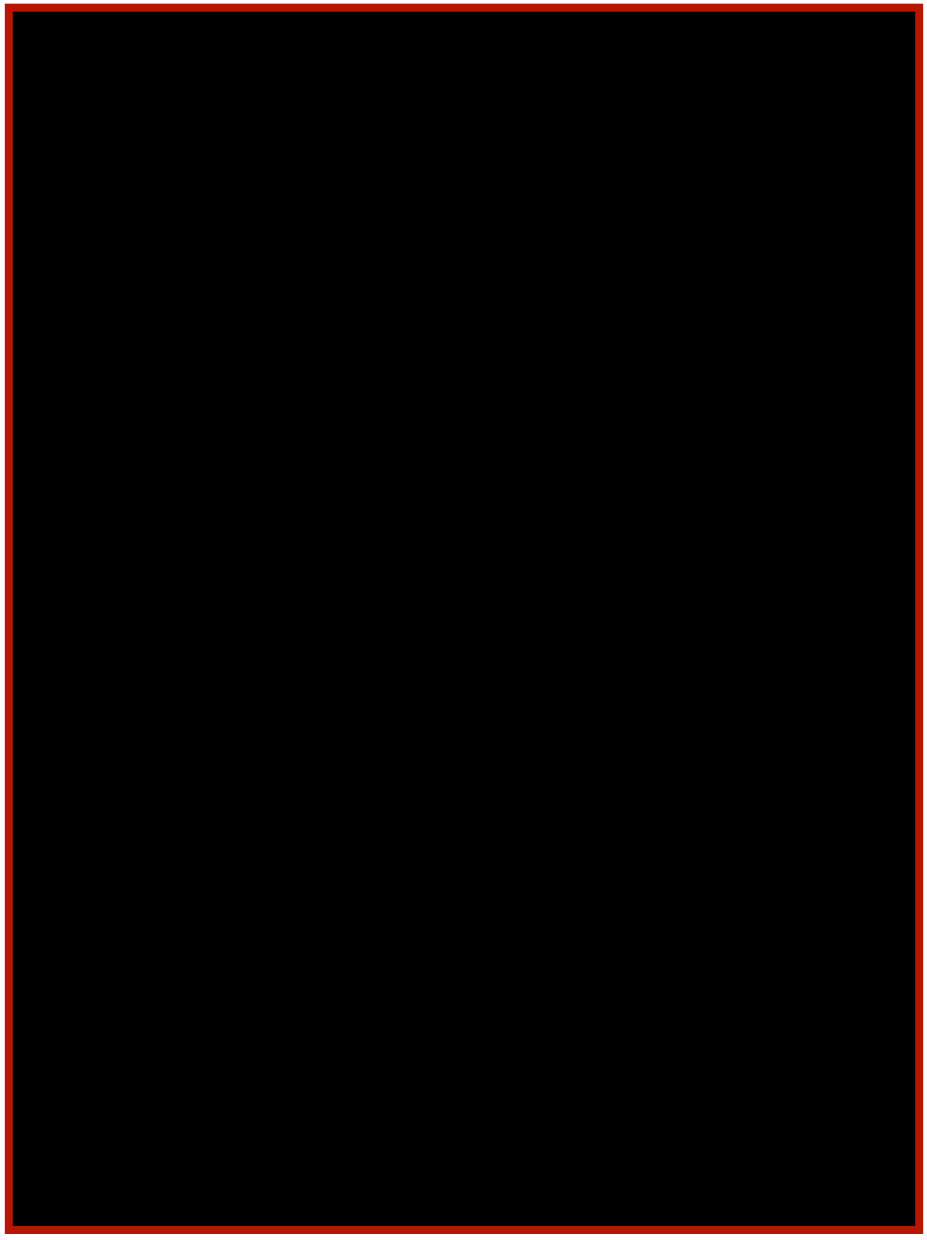
WHEN PETER RABBIT WENT TO SCHOOl

All good little girls and good little boys know that Peter Rabbit lived with his Mother and his little sisters, Flopsy, and Mopsy, and Cottontail, under the roots of a big fir tree at the edge of a great wood. It was a splendid house; just as warm as toast in winter, and lovely and cool in summer. And, oh, my, what a happy family they were.



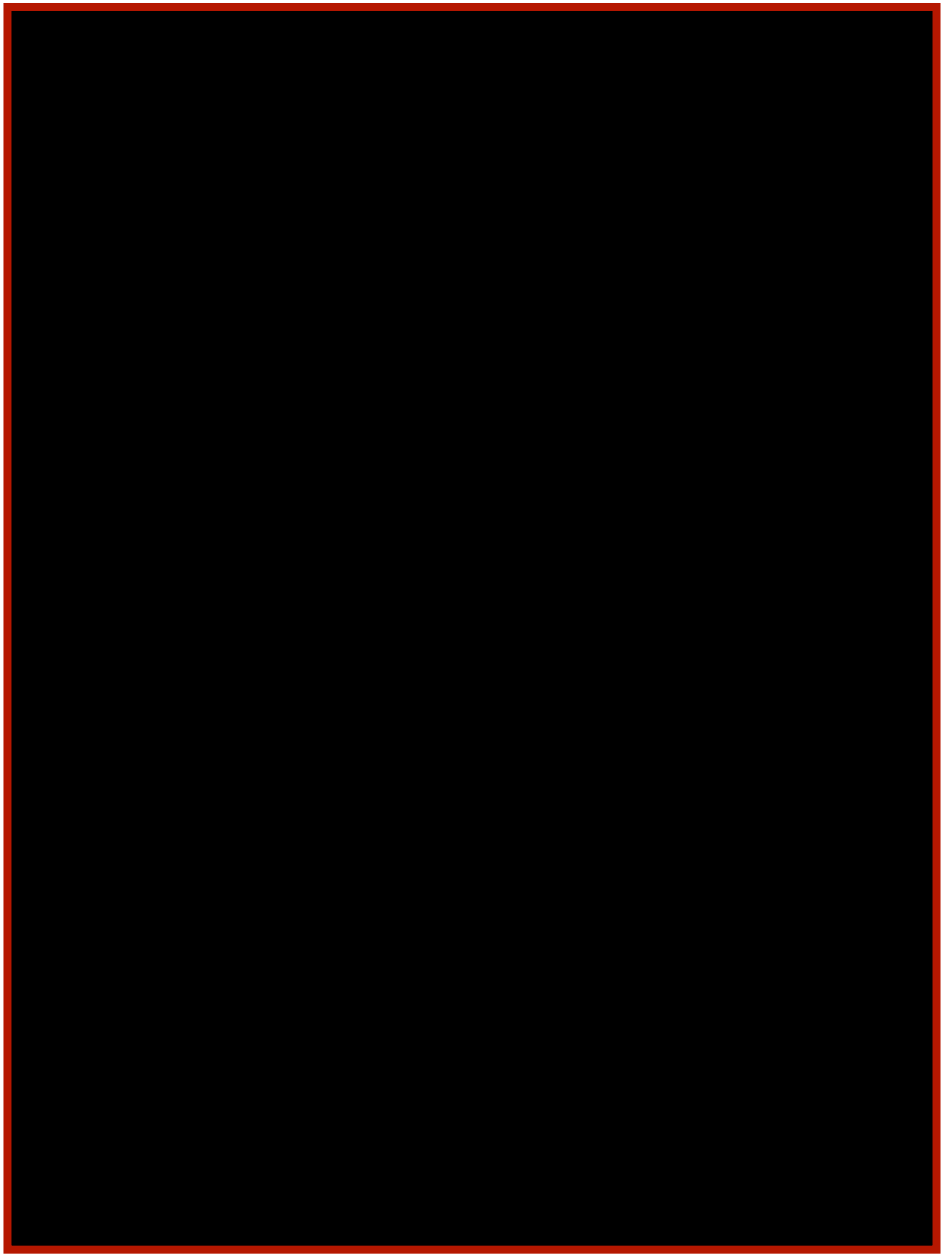
Flopsy, and Mopsy, and Cottontail were as good little rabbits as anyone would want to see, but Peter was always full of mischief. He so many pranks, and got into so many scrapes, that old Mother Rabbit was always afraid that some thing dreadful might happen to him some day.

It seemed that Peter always wanted to do the very things that his Mother had forbidden him to do. She had often warned him never, never, never to go near the well in Mr. McGregor's barnyard, but one day disobedient Peter walked right over to the well and climbed up over the side to see how it looked way down deep in there.

He must have leaned too far over, for all of a sudden in he went, head over heels, down, down, down!

And then where do you think he found himself? In the well bucket, which was way down deep in the well, right on top of the water! He was frightened almost out of his wits, for when he peeped over the side of the bucket, all "he could see was the mossy sides of the well ; and when he looked up, all he could see was just a tiny speck of daylight above. He crouched down in the bucket and, when he thought ofhis Mother and his good little sisters at home under the fir tree, he begn to cry.

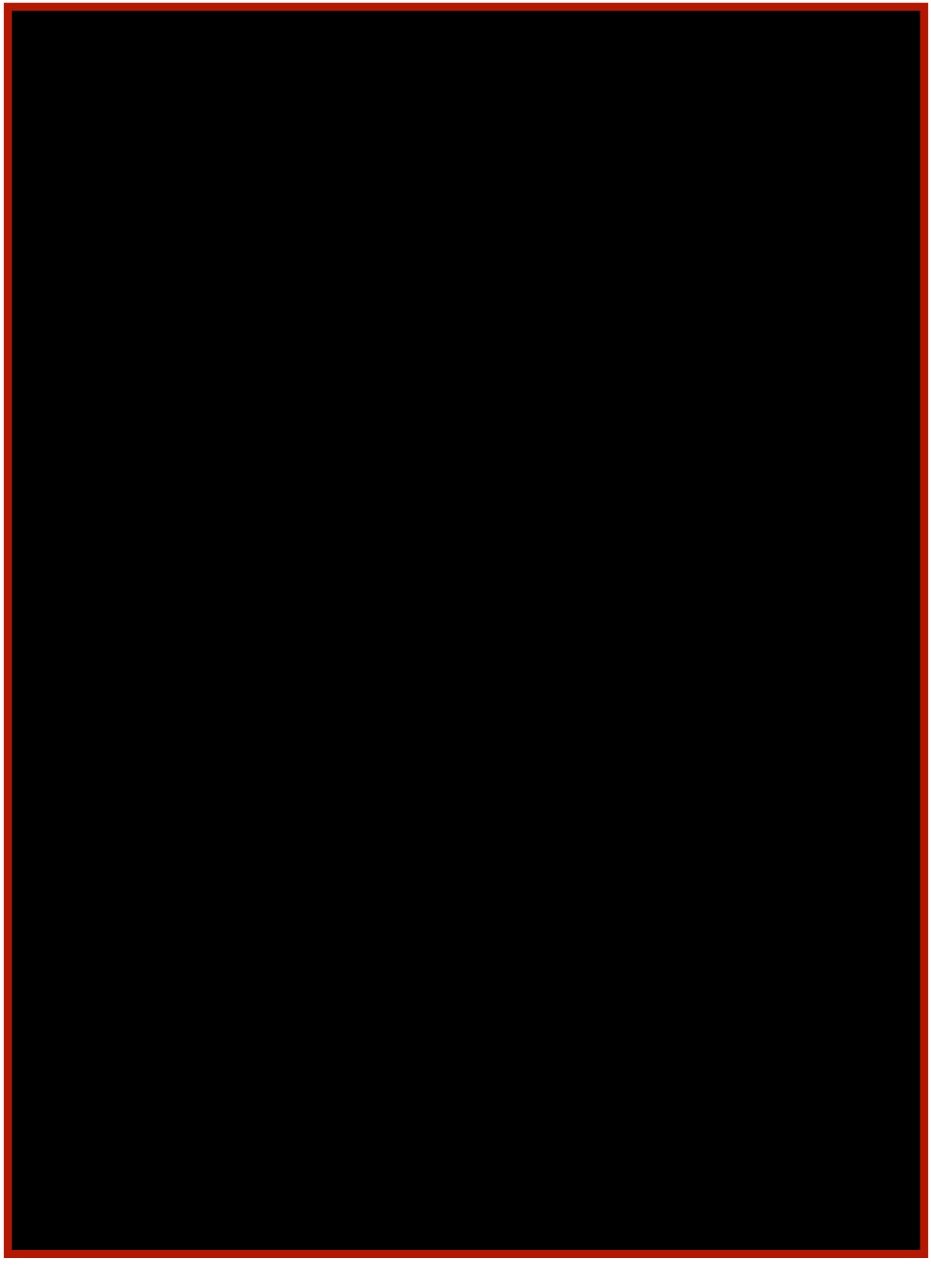
He must have cried himself to sleep for after a while, when he looked up, he could barely see a speck of daylight, and so he thought it must be night. He felt dreadfully sore and cold, and he wondered if he would ever get out, and while he was wondering there was a tug at the rope, and then up went the bucket so quickly that, when it reached the top of the well, Peter was dumped right out on the ground before he could say Jack Robinson. And then whom should he see there but Mr. McGregor!



Peter was so frightened that he took to his heels and ran for dear life out of the barnyard and into the garden among the cabbages. Mr. McGregor ran after him, waving a watering can and calling, "Stop, Thief!" But Peter was soon out of sight, and did not stop running until he reached home and fell into the arms of old Mother Rabbit, who was standing in the doorway.

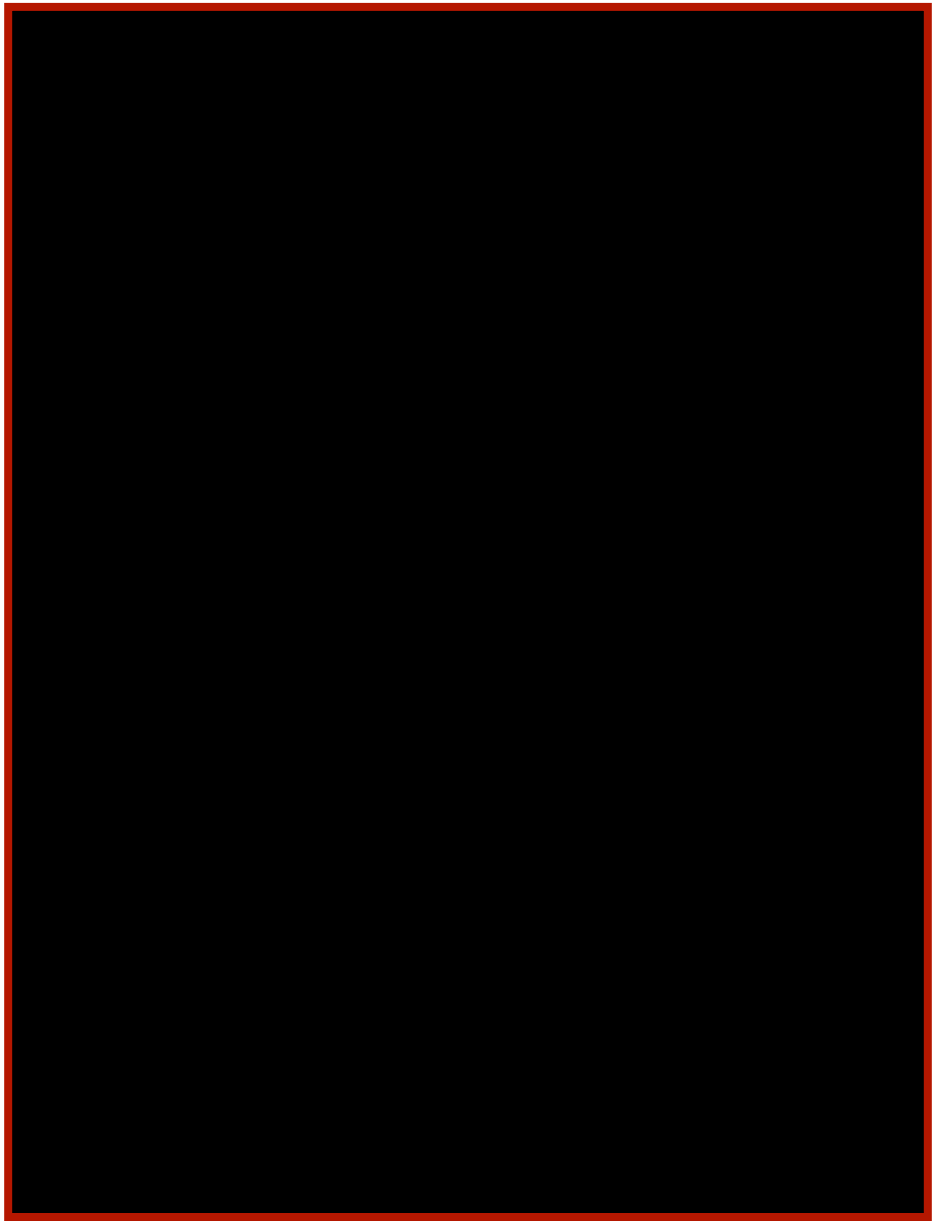
When Peter had told her all about his adventure, old Mother Rabbit was so glad to have him back home that she forgot all about punishing him for his disobience.

And Peter promised her faithfully that he never would go near the well again.



Mother Rabbit never left home without wondering what Peter would do next, so at last she resolved to send Peter and his sisters to school. But she never did anything without first consulting Uncle Jack Rabbit, for ever since Daddy Rabbit, the children's father, was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor, she had always asked Uncle Jack's advice upon all matters.

So early one morning in the autumn, when the frost was on the ground and the trees were red and gold she put on her bonnet and shawl and called the children to her side.

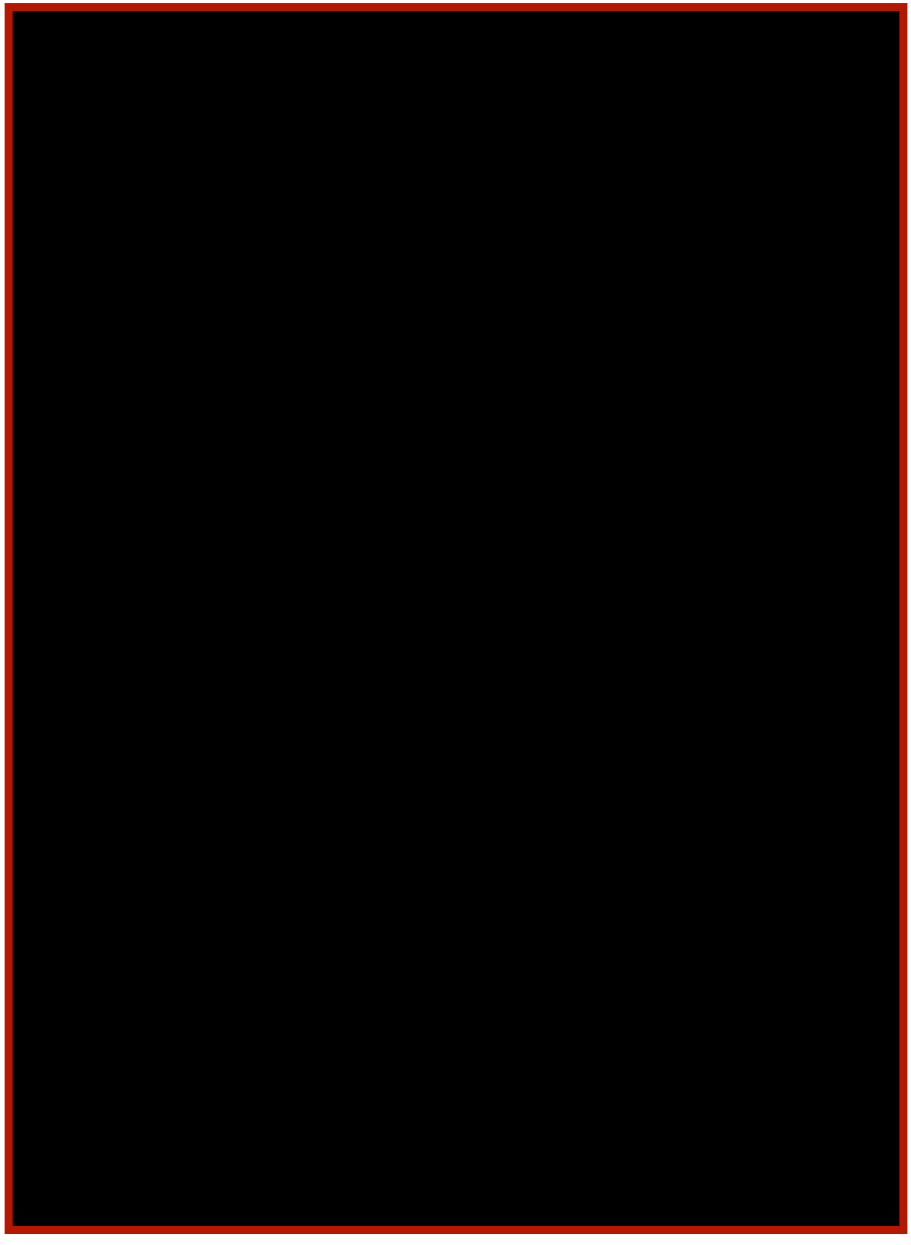


"Now, my dears, I am going to call on Uncle Jack, and I want you all to be good while I am gone."

Flopsy, and Mopsy, and Cotton-tail said they would be good, and Peter said he would try.

Uncle Jack Rabbit was dozing by the fire when Mother Rabbit arrived. He jumped up quickly, put on his specs, and listened attentively to her plan to send the children to school, and agreed that it was a good thing to do.

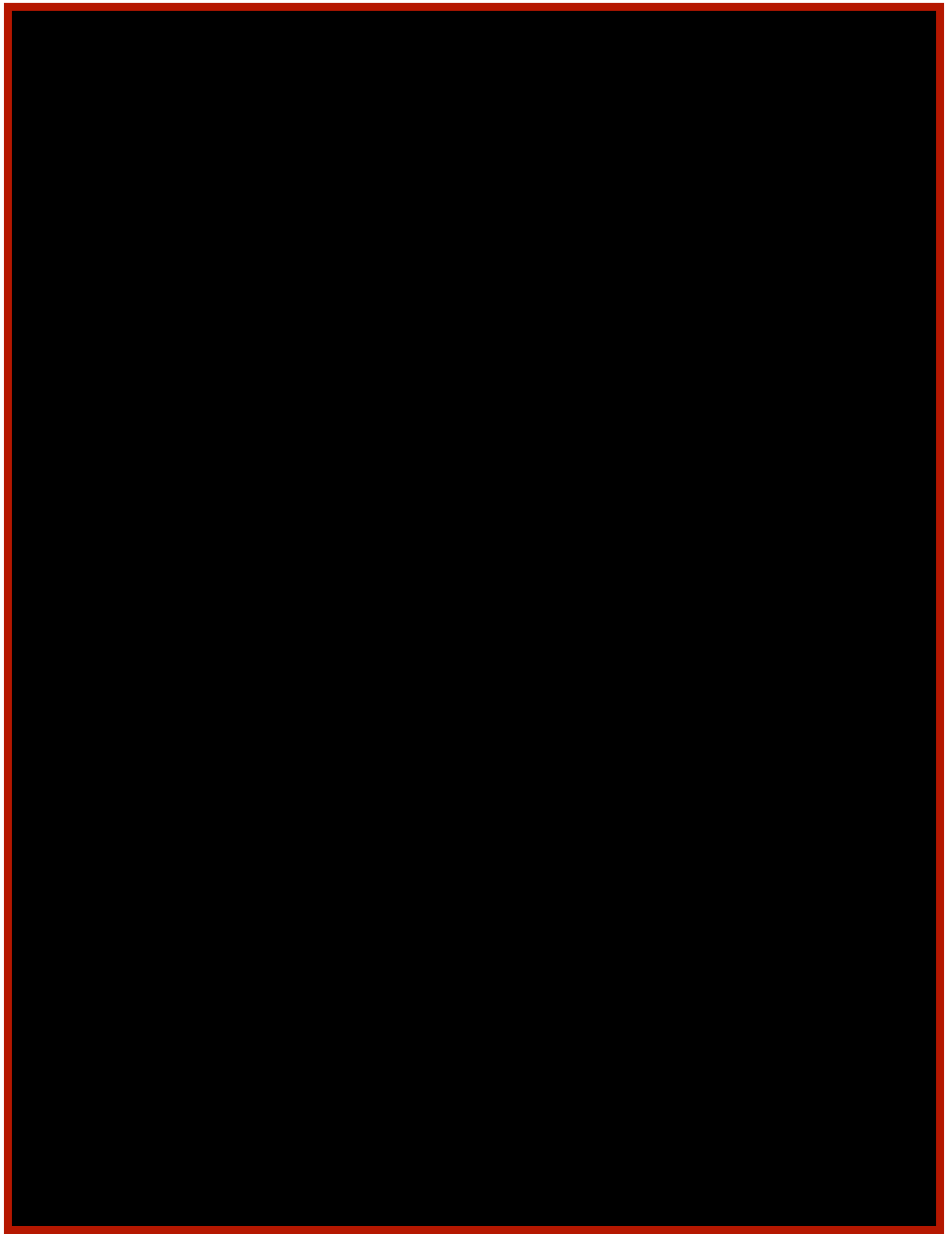
Now Miss Hannah Hare, who was getting along in years, had opened a select school for children under a pile of logs down by the saw-mill.



She was well known for miles around. So old Mother Rabbit on her way home stopped to see Miss Hannah and made arrangements for Flopsy, and Mopsy, and Cottontail, and Peter to start attendance at her school in a few days.

Then old Mother Rabbit, who was always most thoughtful, bought four

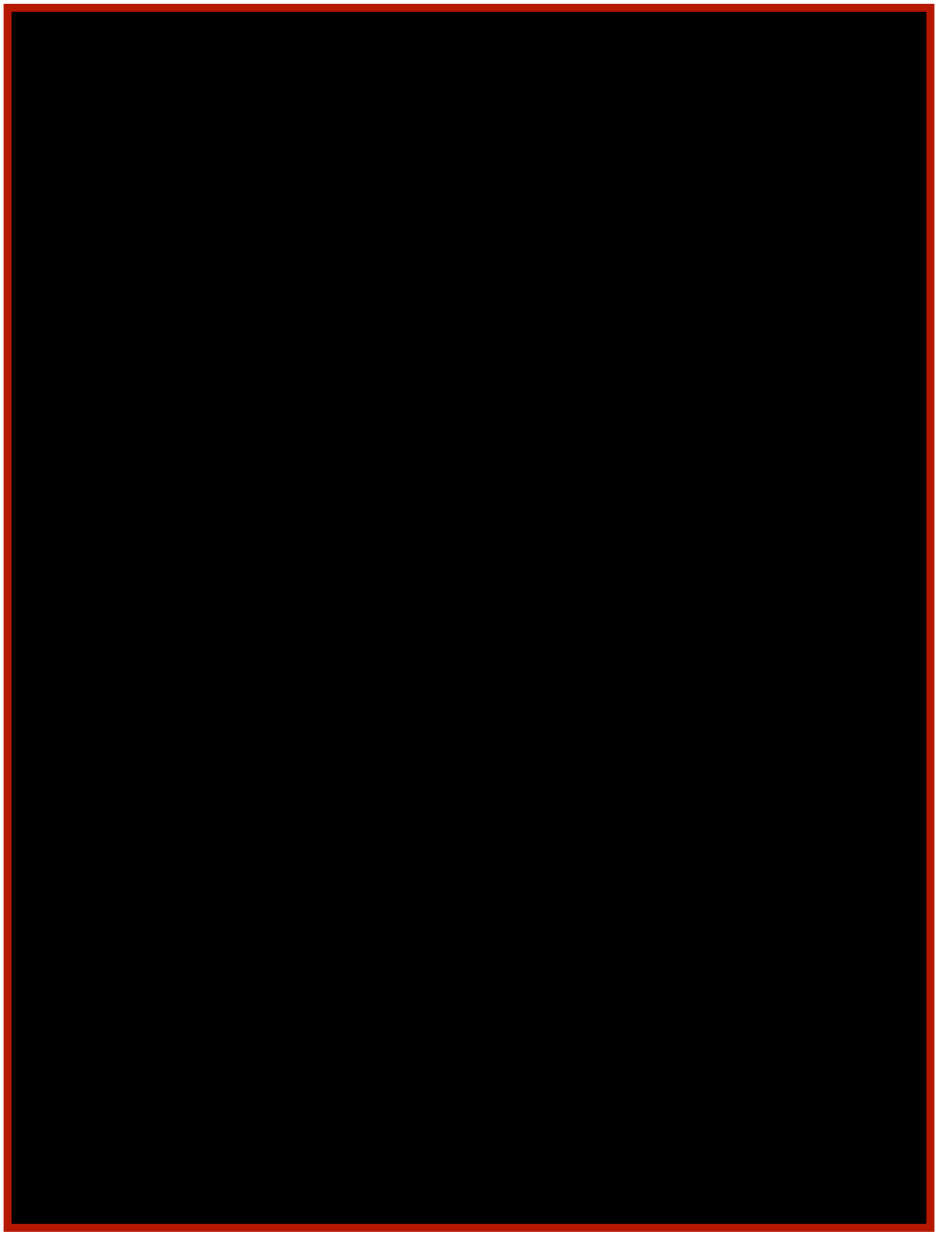
little lunch baskets for the children, and she bought for Flopsy, and Mopsy, and Cottontail lovely red school bags for their books. There was a big white F for Flopsy on Flopsy's bag. There was a big black M for Mopsy on Mopsy's bag. And there was a big green C for Cottontail on her bag.



But for Peter's books old Mother Rabbit just bought a nice long leather strap.

So a few mornings later, bright and early, Peter and his sisters set out for Miss Hare's school. Old Mother Rabbit stood by the door and shed a few tears as she watched them go and they waved their hands to her until they could no longer see her.

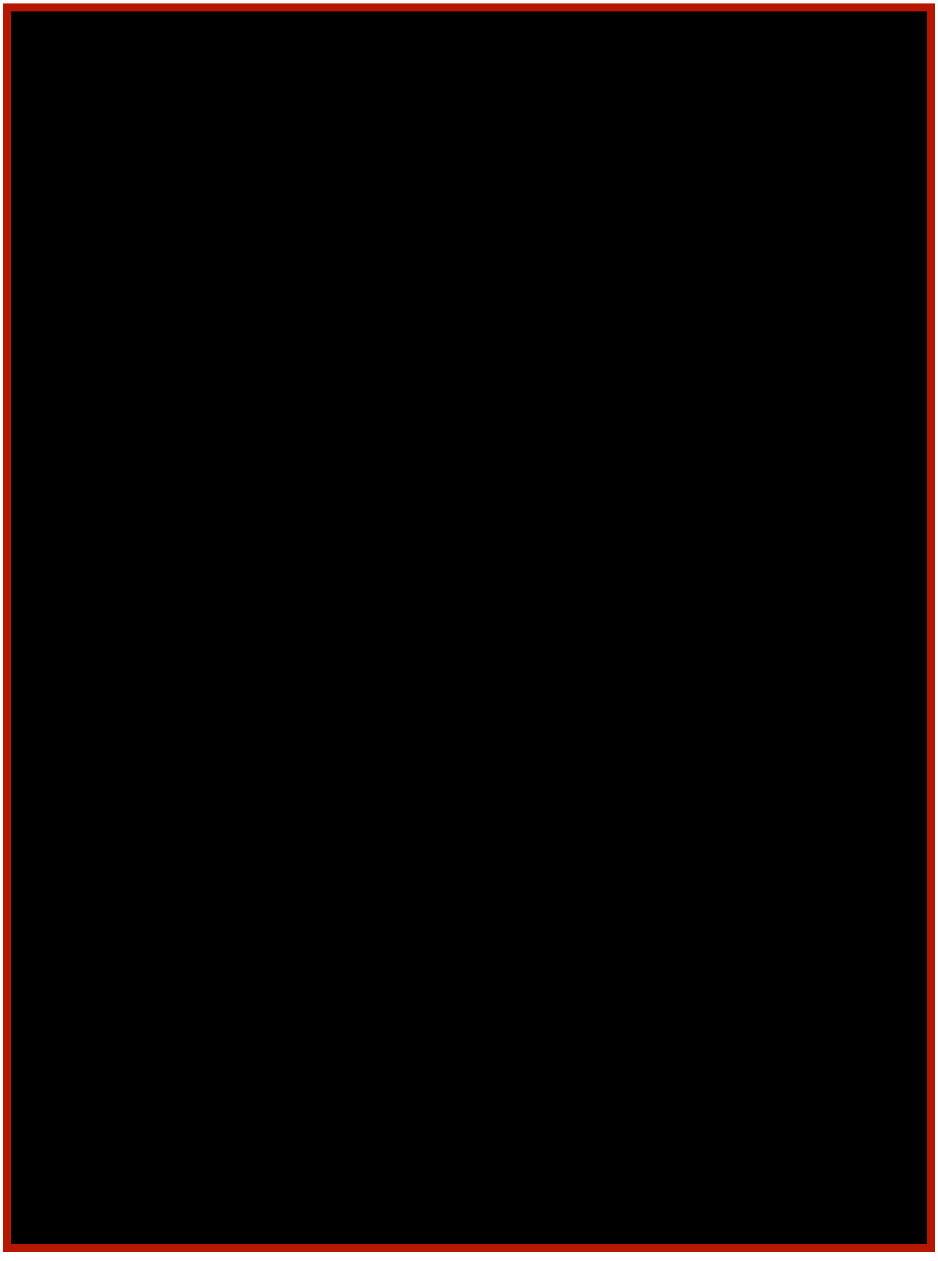
Peter would stop here and there to nibble at tempting little twigs and nice juicy berries. Flopsy and Mopsy ran on ahead, but Cottontail, who loved Peter very dearly, waited for him, begging him all the while to hurry on for fear they would be late.



At a turn in the road they met Billy Bull-Frog. He was capering about and wading in all the little pools of water to his heart's content. He never wore overshoes, and he never caught cold. My, how Peter envied him.

Cottontail whispered to Peter that Billy Bull-Frog was covered all over with mud, and that he certainly did not look fit to go to school, so Peter was very glad that he had not waded in the puddles.

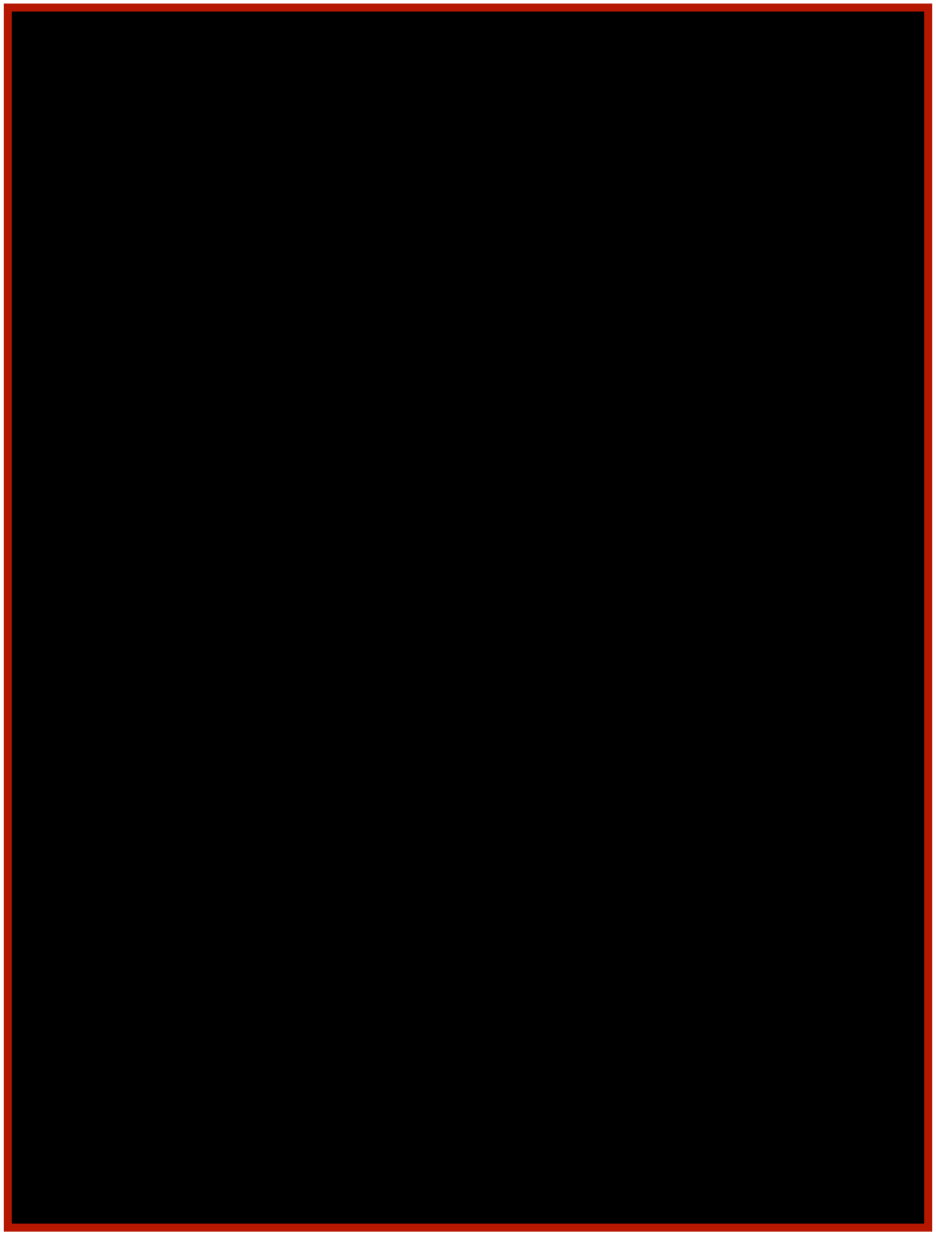
When they arrived at school LittleSquirrelie Squirreliekin, and Little Bunnie Bunniekin, and Bobby Coon ran out to meet them, and just in side the gate they saw Mrs. Tabby-



Cat's children, Teedy, Deedy, and Dot, wearing their brand-new red mittens.

It was surely a large school, for there were Polly Possum, Ducky Daddies, Robby Rooster, Little Fannie Field-Mouse, and lots of other pupils that Peter and his sisters had never seen before.

School was soon called to order by Miss Hannah Hare, who was all dressed up in a tailored suit with a choker collar, and sat on a platform back of a desk. She called each pupil's name, and they all answered "present" except Little Bunnie Bunniekin. He

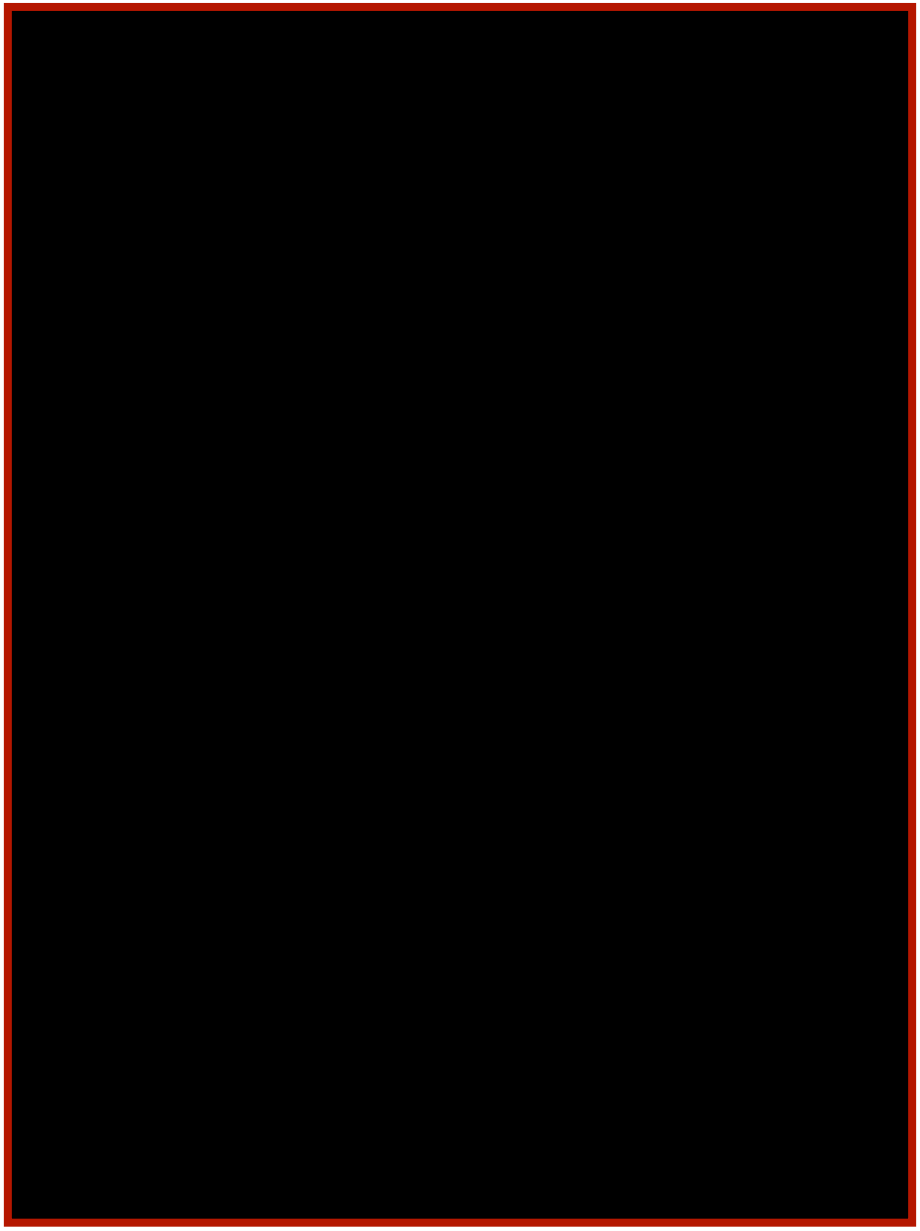


said "here"; and for saying that, he had to write "here" on the blackboard twenty times.

The Teacher called upon Peter to pass around the writing books, and he was so bashful that his little ears just wiggled and wiggled, as he went from one pupil to another, giving out the books.

It was against the rules to eat in school, but Peter did not know that.

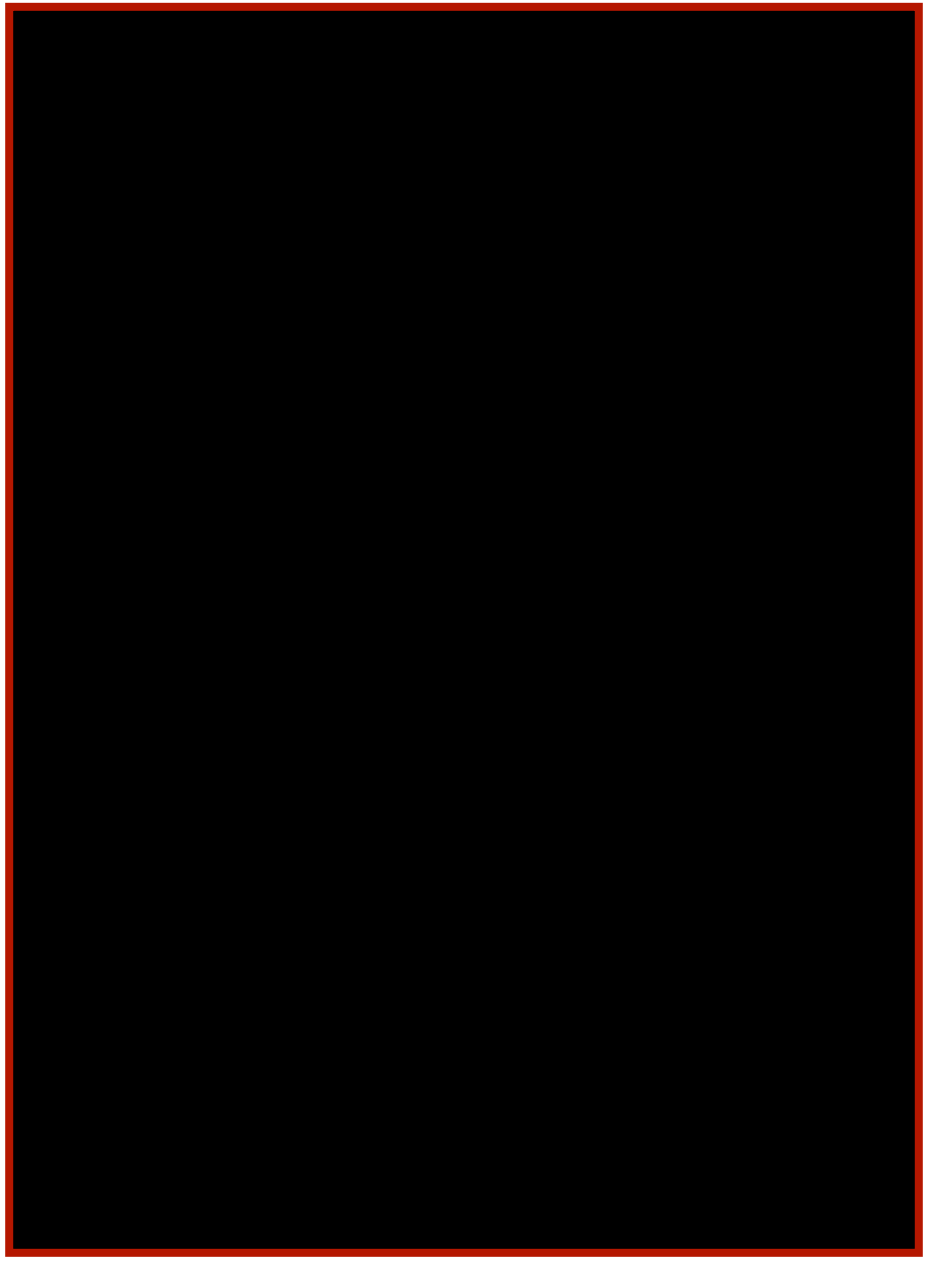
So after a while, when he thought of the nice juicy carrot in his lunchbasket, he took it out and nibble away with great relish.



When Miss Hannah Hare saw Peter eating the carrot she was very angry indeed, and sent him to a corner to stand on one foot.

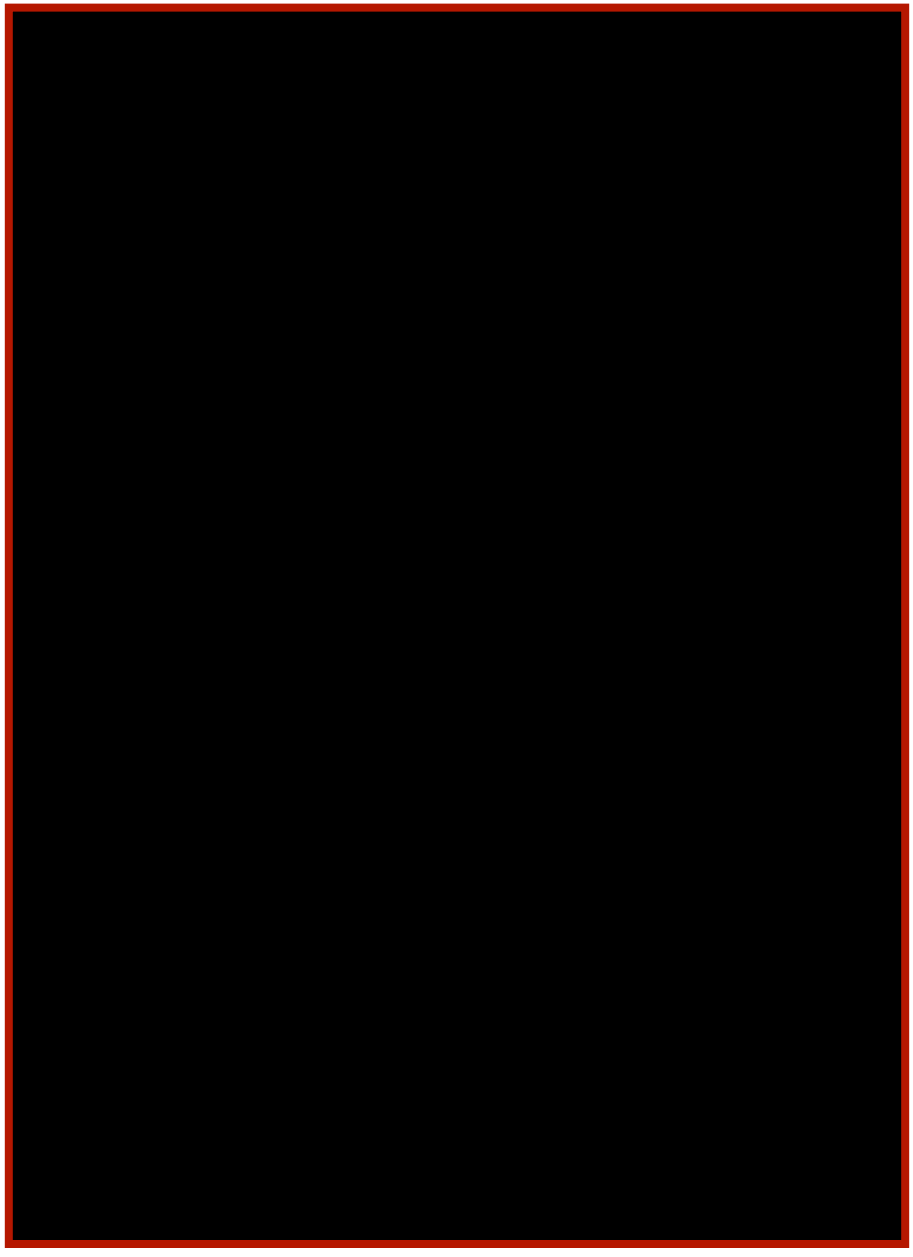
Poor Peter was terribly embarrassed, for he could see that most of were laughing at him. But after a while Miss Hannah said he might return to his seat.

Then the singing class was called to the piano at the back of the platform. Billy Bull-Frog's aunt, Miss Phyllis Frog, who had a powerful voice, especially in Springtime, taught this class.



Ducky Daddies wanted to have his voice cultivated, but, as all he could sing was "Quack, Quack, Quack." Miss Phyllis refused point-blank to have him in the singing class.

After the singing lesson was over, Cottontail was called upon to speak a piece. She was getting along beautifully, and Peter felt very proud of her, when suddenly Little Fanny Field-Mouse, who had fallen fast asleep, snored right out loud. The whole school went into roars of laughter, which wakened Little Fanny Field-Mouse, so she ran and hid behind Miss Hannah's skirts to hide her embarrassment.

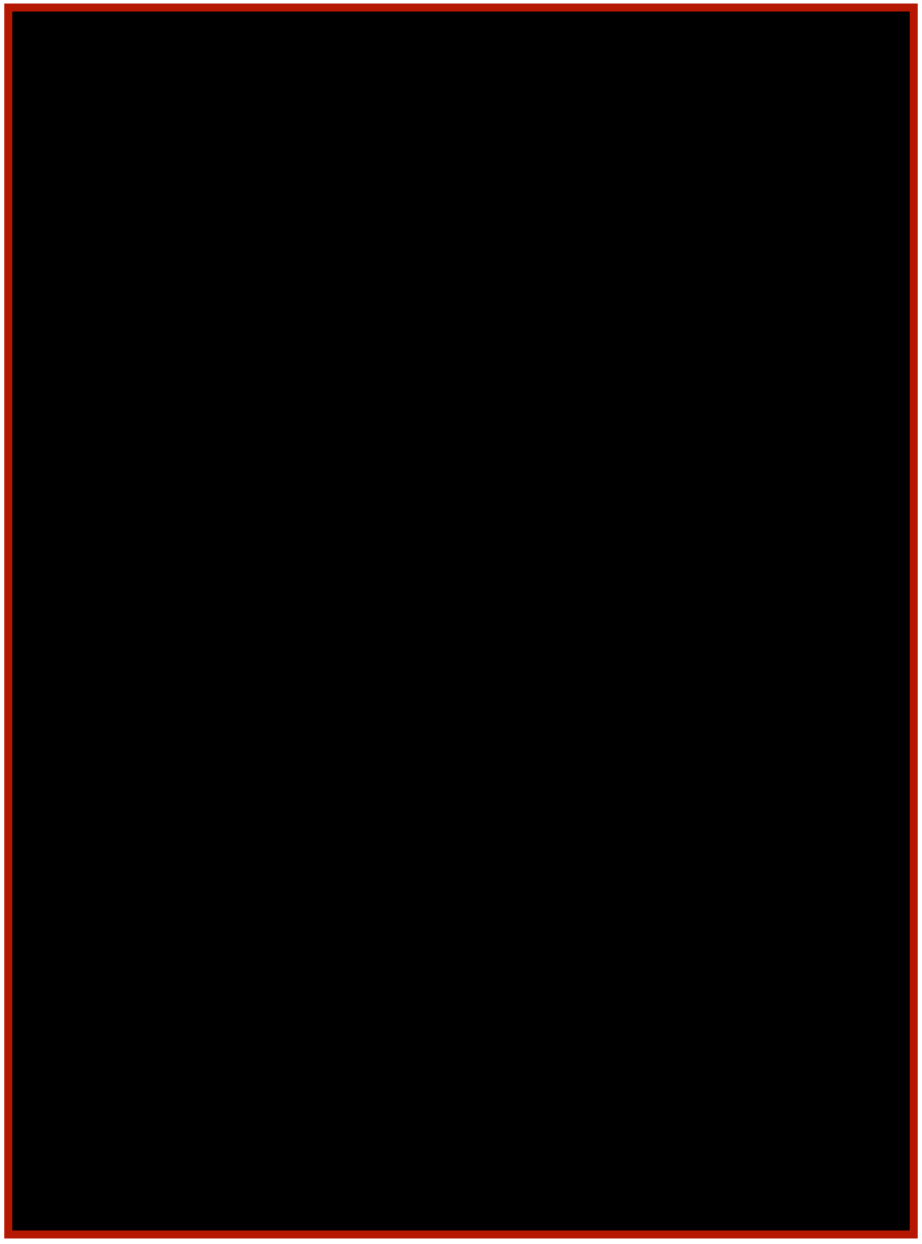


Poor Cottontail was so confused that she forgot her piece and begged to be excused.

When the recess bell rang Teacher called all the pupils around her.

"Now, children," she said, "go out and play and have a good time, but, whatever you do, don't go into the wood. You can never tell what might happen to you there."

All the while Miss Hare was talking, Little Squirrelie Squirreliekin, who was a great chum of Peter's, was whispering to him that the wood was just full of nuts, and while Peter did not care for nuts he kept thinking it would be lots of fun

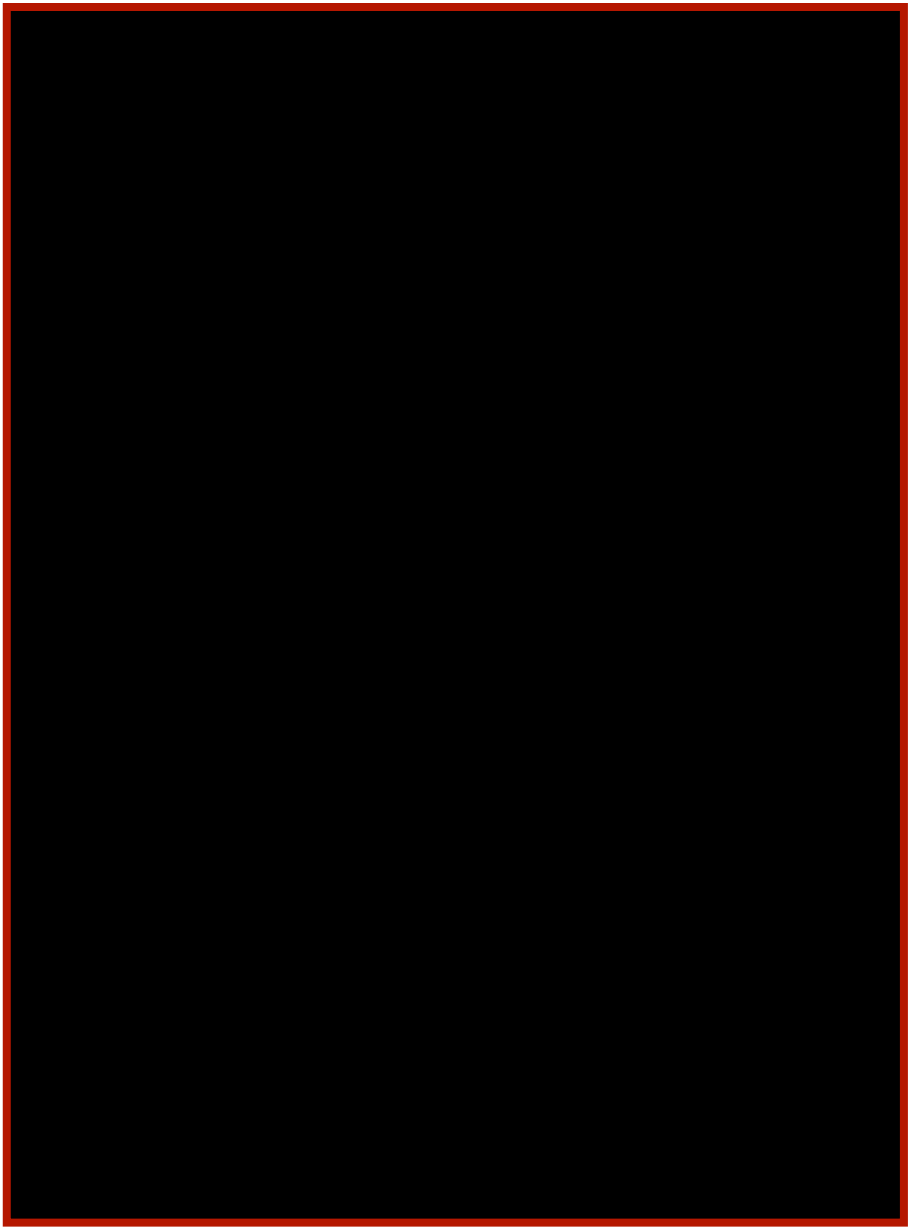


to take his little basket and gather some; for it seemed to be Peter's nature to want always to do the very thing he was told not to do.

Cottontail suspected what Peter wanted to do, and with tears in her eyes she implored him not to go into the wood.

"Oh, we'll be back before the bell -rings," said Peter, and then he and Little Squirrelie Squirreliekin, arm in arm, went skipping off among the trees.

They came to a place where the ground was covered with acorns, and they were having no end of fun picking them up when heard a voice suddenly they crying:



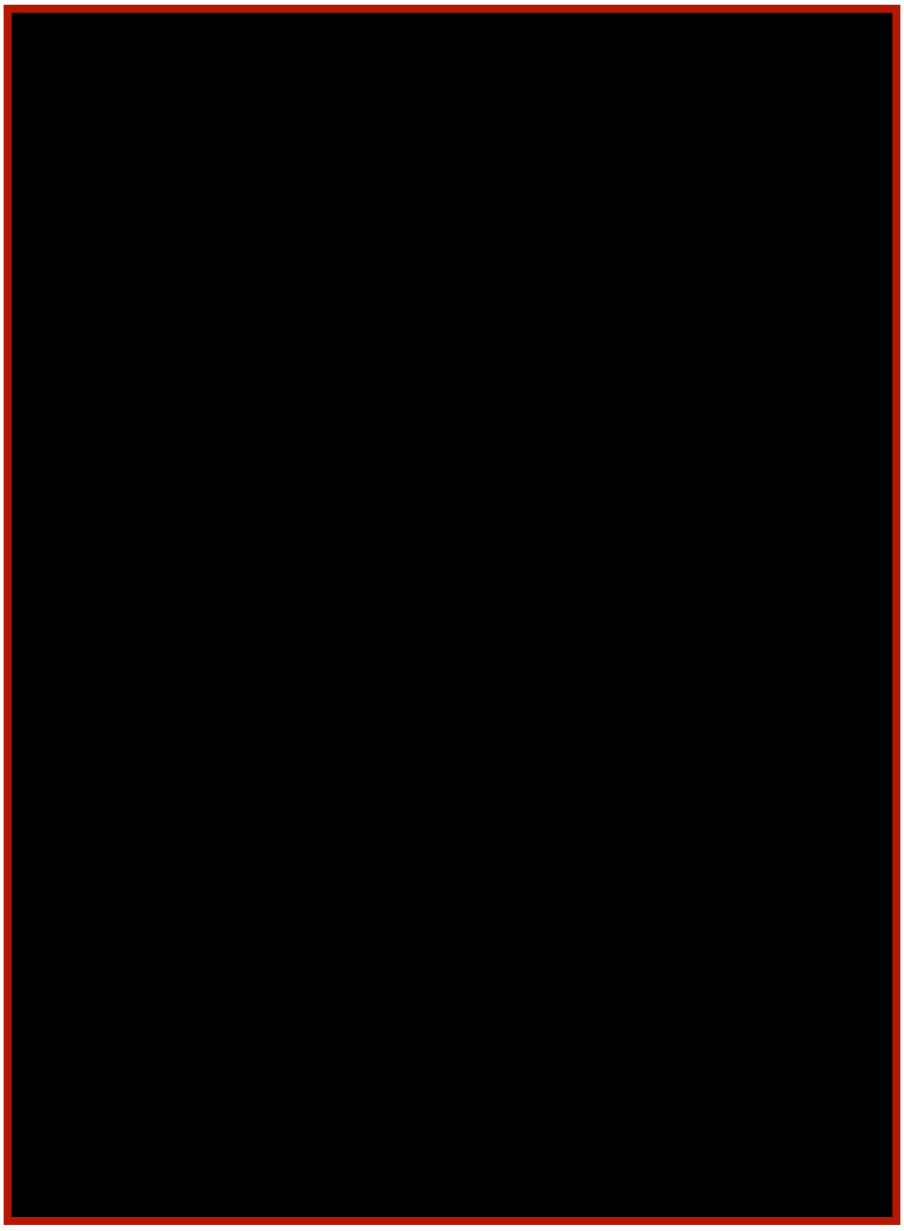
"Whoo-whoo?" Peter and Squirrelie looked up and saw old Oliver Owl sitting on a limb of the oak tree.

"Whoo-whoo?" cried Mr. Owl, looking down with his big wise eyes.

"I— I am Peter Rabbit," said Peter, "and he is Little Squirrelie Squirreliekin," pointing to Squirrelie.

"Whoo-whoo?" cried Mr. Owl in a dreadfully loud voice, and Peter and Squirrelie, supposing he was angry because they were gathering acorns under his tree, took to their heels and ran off as fast as their little legs could carry them.

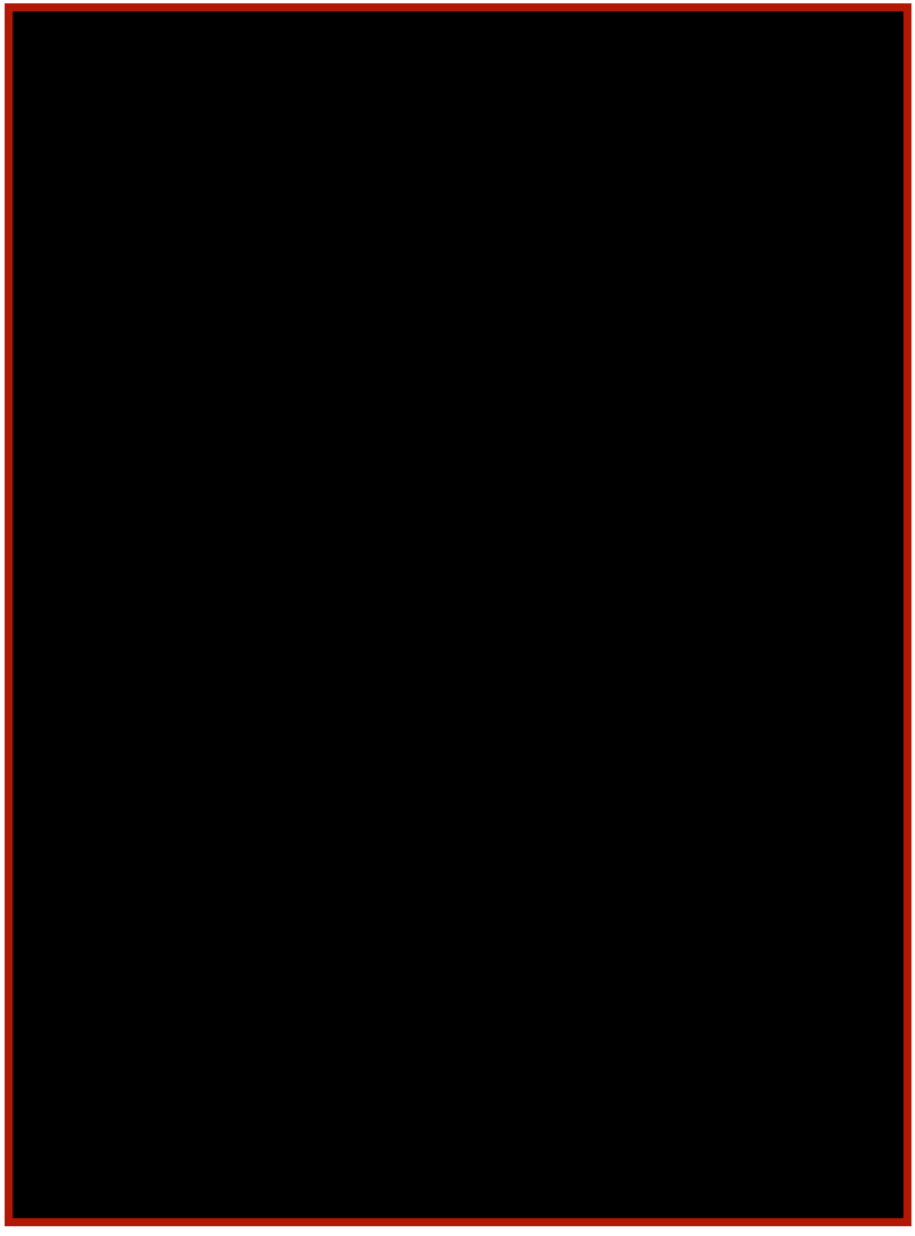
Little Squirrelie Squirreliekin ran in the right direction and got back to school, safe and sound.



But poor Peter ran in the wrong direction and was getting farther and farther away from the schoolhouse all the time.

At last Peter was so dreadfully out of breath that he just had to sit down on an old stump to rest; and while he was sitting there, wishing he had not disobeyed his teacher, he heard voices nearby. Two little boys carrying a basket between them, soon came up, and when they saw Peter they dropped their basket and jumped up and down like little wild Indians.

"Oh, let's catch the rabbit and play menagerie!" cried one of the boys.

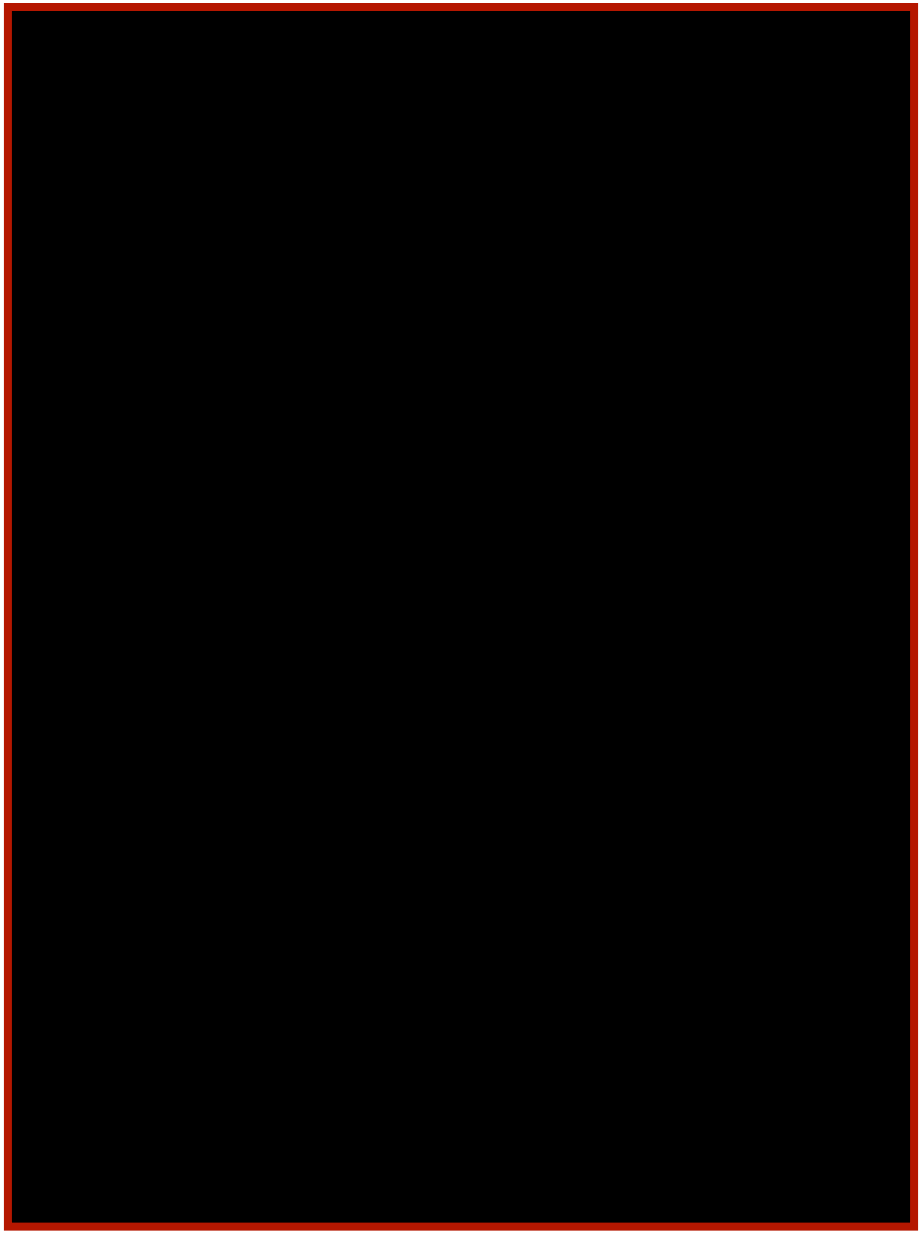


Peter's little pink nose began to wiggle and his eyes grew as big as saucers. Then, all of a sudden, the basket the boys had been carrying came down over him before he had a chance to jump out of the way, and Peter was frightened almost out of his wits.

"We'll play he's a bear," shouted one of the little boys.

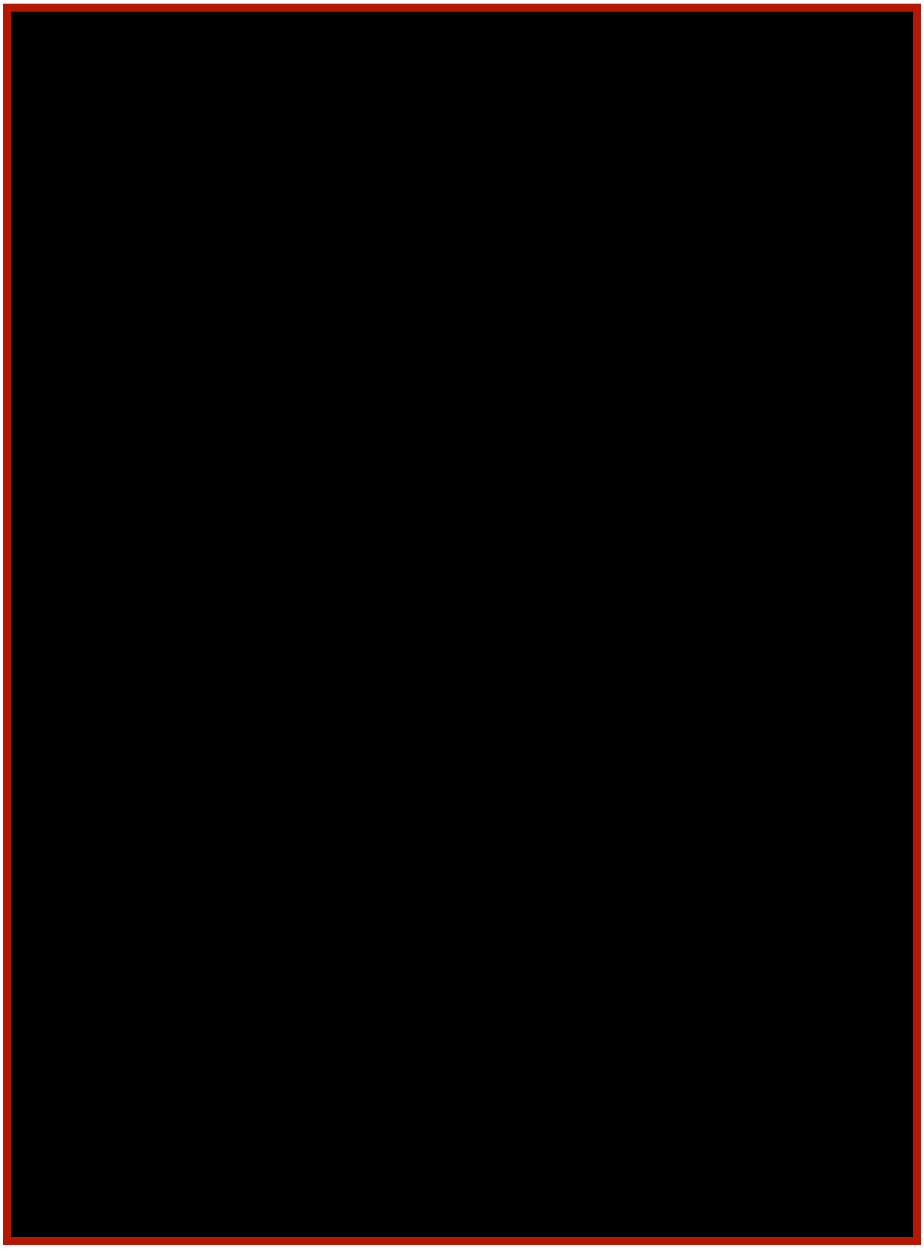
"No siree!" cried the other; "he's a lion."

And while they were arguing over whether Peter should be a bear or a lion they knocked over the basket and Peter made his escape, and scampered off as fast as his little legs would carry him.



When Little Squirrelie Squirrel-iekin came back to school without Peter, Miss Hannah Hare was very much alarmed, and she ordered Little Bunnie Bunniekin to ring the schoolhouse bell just as hard as he could, and she sent Billy Coon and Little Squirrelie Squirreliekin to search for Peter all along the edge of the wood.

Flopsy, and Mopsy, and Cottontail were in so much distress that they were given permission to stop studying until Peter returned. Poor little Cottontail put her head on Miss Hannah's shoulder and sobbed as though her heart would break, for she was afraid Peter had either been eaten up by a bear or had fallen into Mr. McGregor's well again.

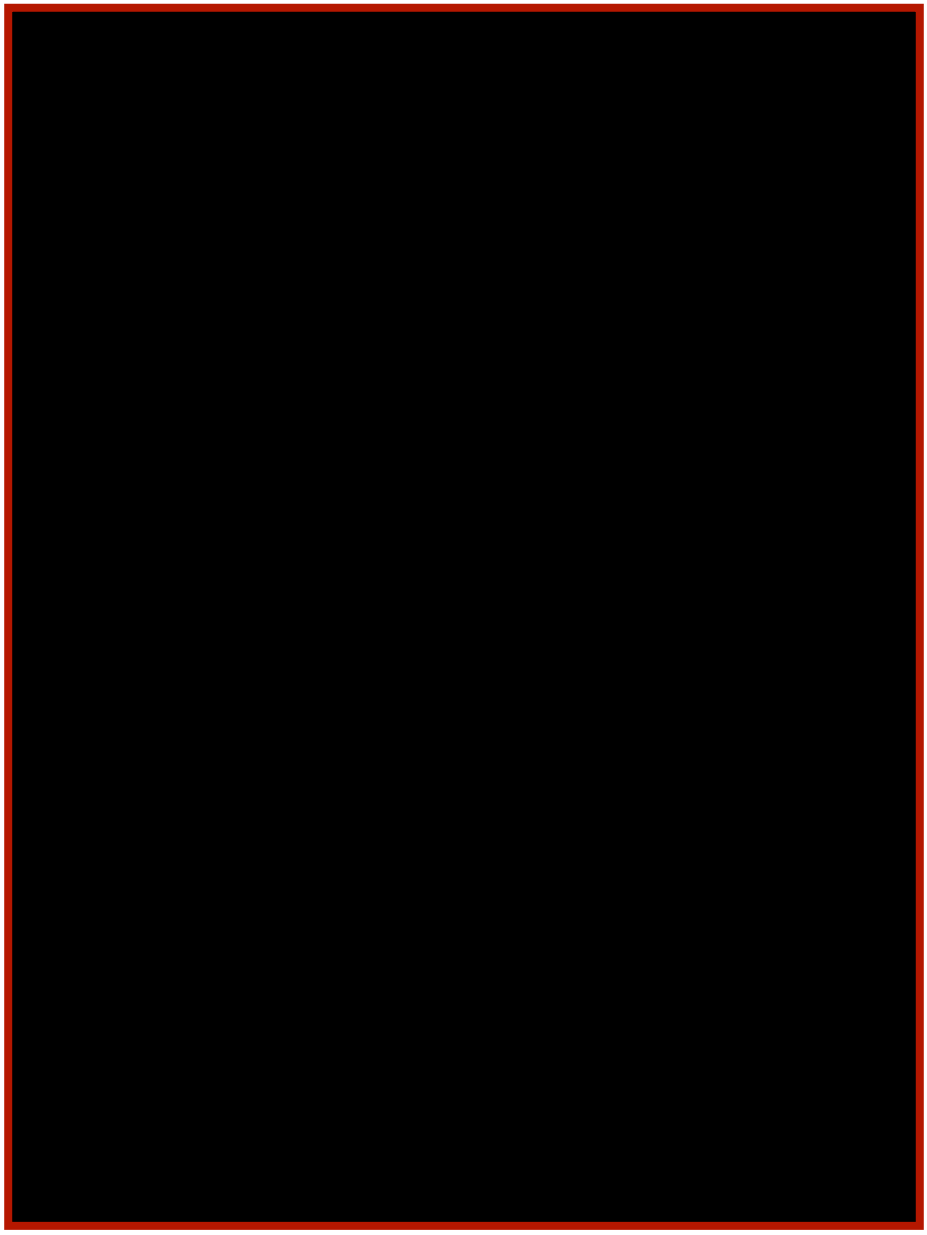


After a while Peter found his way out of the wood and came to a queer little house with a thatched roof. The great big door was wide open and just inside there was a funny little blacksmith who wore a big black leather apron. He was shoeing the cutest little gray pony Peter had ever seen.

"My!" said Peter. "I wish I could ride your pony."

"Maybe you might," chuckled the blacksmith. "Suppose you ask that little girl yonder if she will let you ride her pony."

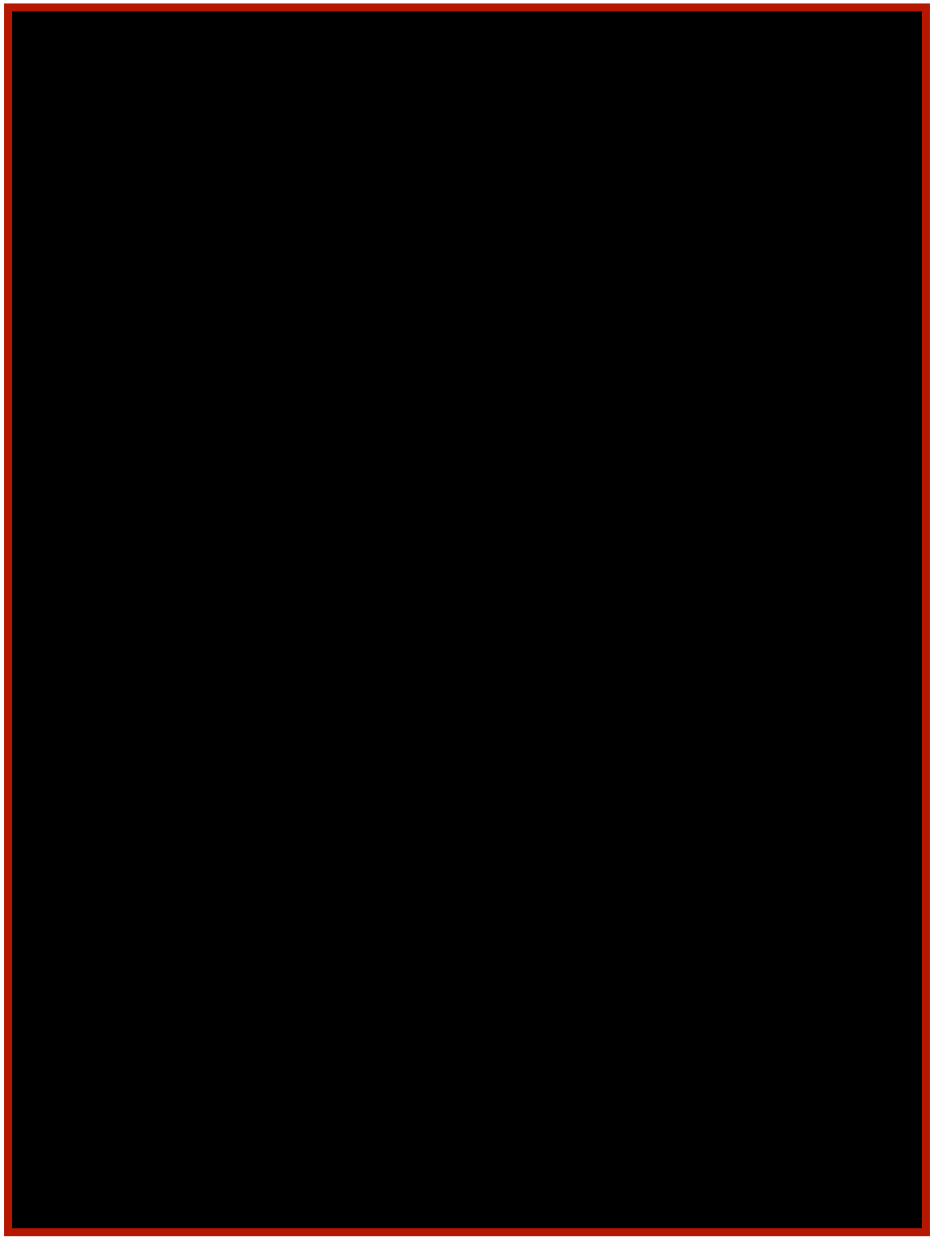
Peter turned quickly around and whom should he see, sitting on a stool in the corner, but the little girl with the



brown curls who had taken him home one day in her red automobile. The little girl was so happy to see Peter that she jumped up and gave him a hearty hug. Peter was impolite enough to cry "Ouch!" for, as a matter of fact, he did not care about being hugged.

When the blacksmith had finished shoeing the pony, the little girl said

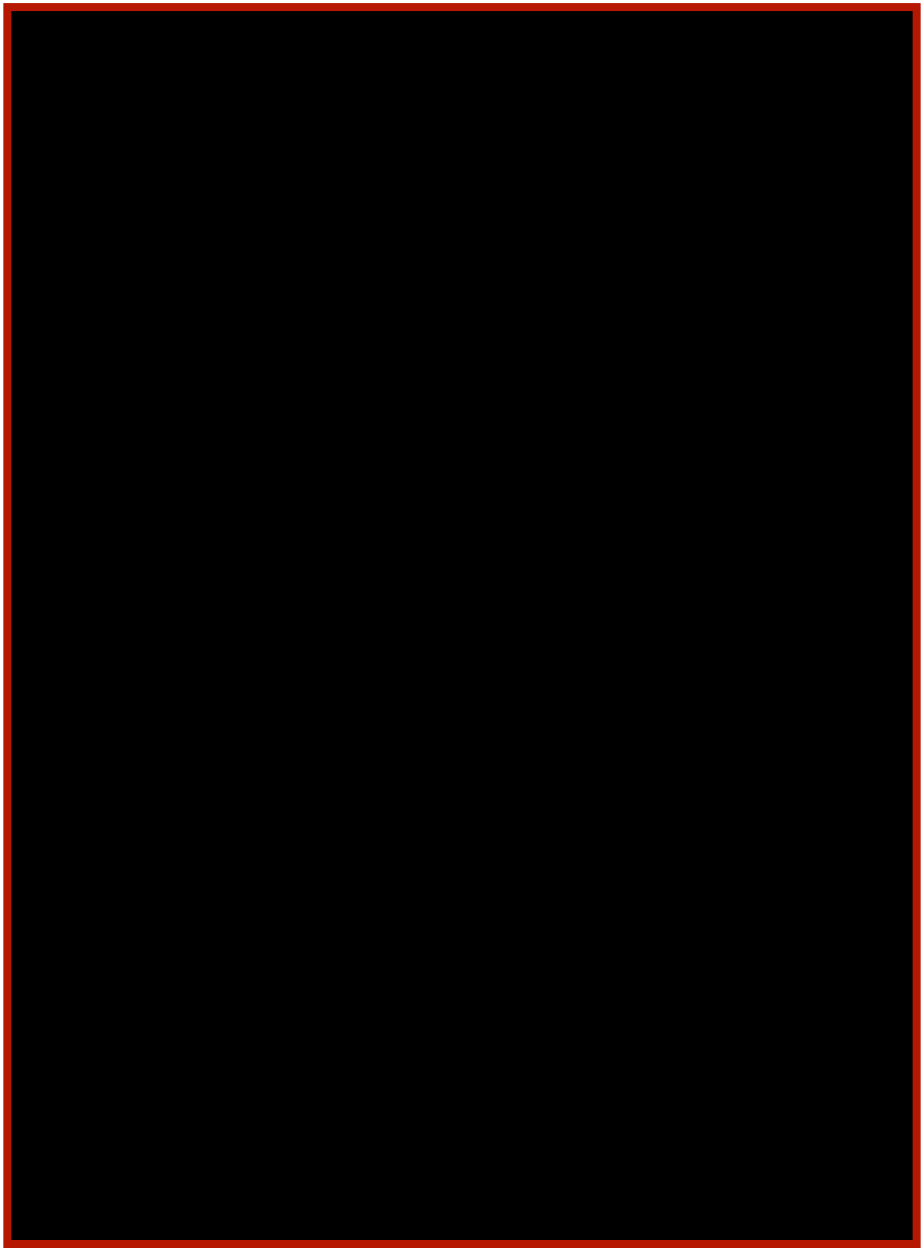
Peter might ride the pony up and down for a while. Peter's heart went pit-a-pat, but he wanted so much to ride pony-back that he wouldn't let on that he was the least bit afraid. So the blacksmith said, "One, two, three, and up goes he," as he placed Peter on the pony's back.



"Hold on to the reins, Peter, and don't jerk," said the little girl. But Peter must have jerked the reins a little bit, for the pony started off on a great canter, running around in a ring.

"Stop I" cried Peter. But the pony didn't stop. Poor Peter expected to tumble to the ground at any moment.

"Stop! Stop! Stop!" he cried, growing more and more terrified, but round and round the pony galloped. Then the little girl called very softly, "Stop, January!"

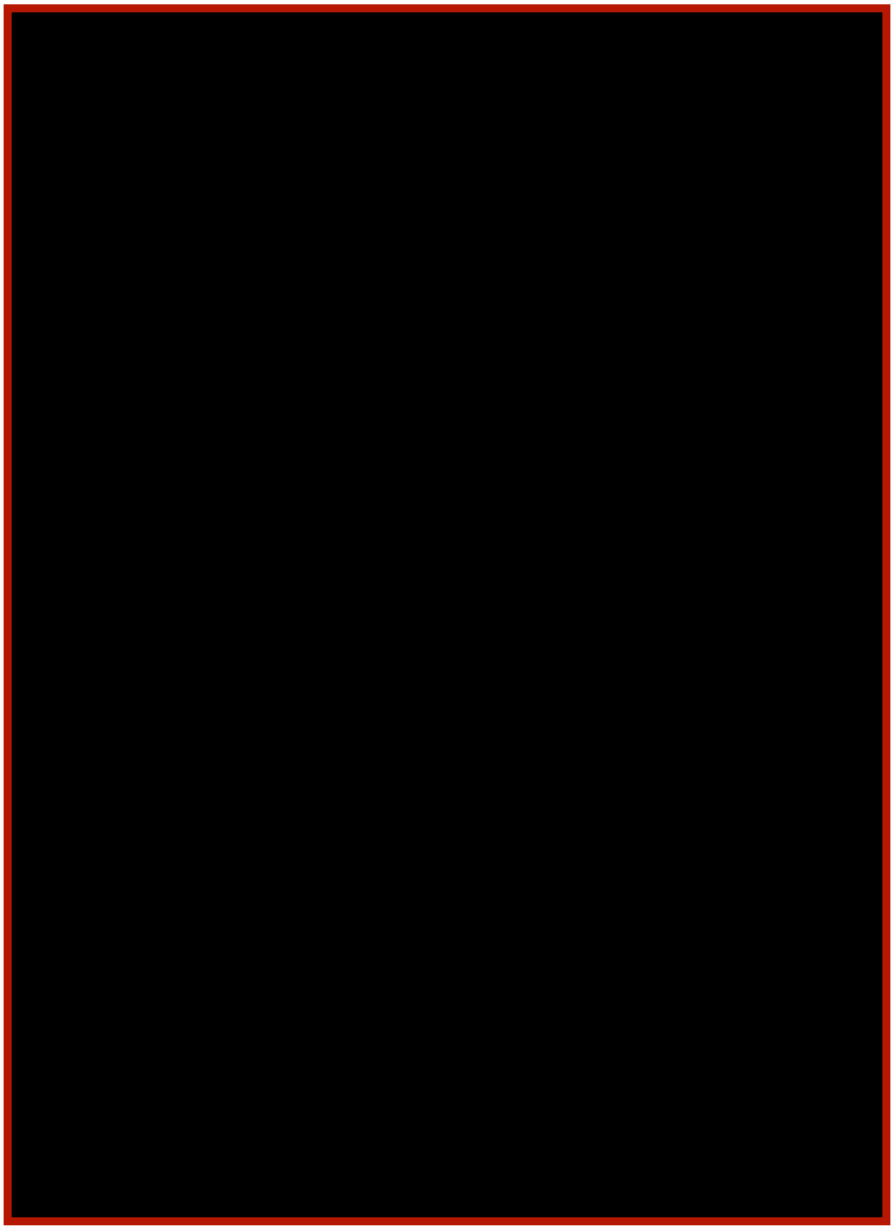


And, would you believe it? January stopped still at once, and then walked meek as a lamb up to the blacksmith's door.

"Oh, Peter," cried the little girl when the blacksmith lifted Peter from the pony's back, "you were afraid."

"Not much," said Peter, taking on a brave air now that he was safe on the ground. "Anyway I won't be afraid at all the next time."

The little girl smiled at that, and the blacksmith, just roared with laughter, for he knew that boys never like to admit that they are afraid of anything.



Suddenly Peter clapped his little hands over his mouth, and he looked so queer that the little girl shook him by the shoulder.

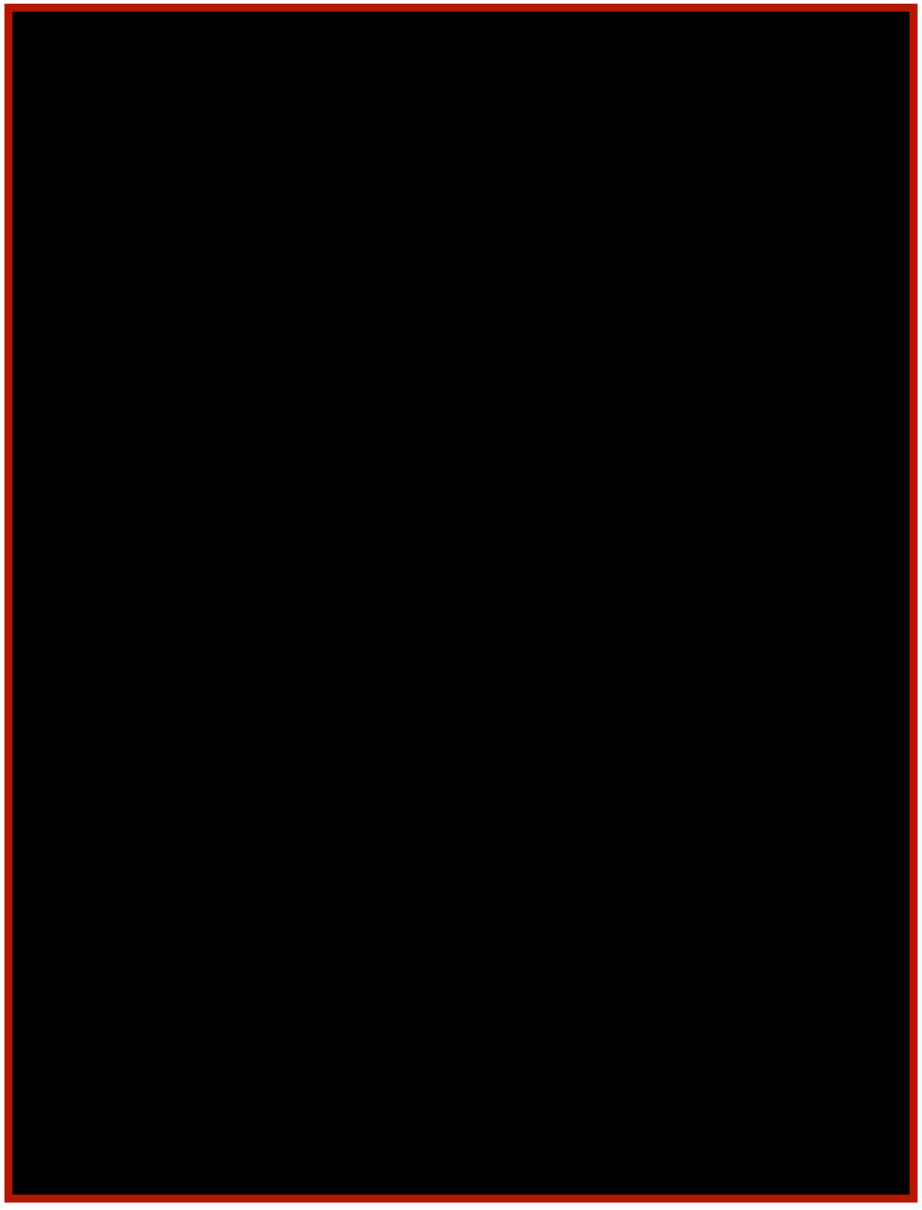
"Dear me, what is wrong with you now?" she asked.

"Oh, my! Oh, my! Oh, my!" wailed Peter. "This is recess, and I forgot all about and will be late, and Teacher will punish me again."

"Oh, do you go to school?' inquired the little girl.

"Yes, indeed," said Peter, feeling very important.

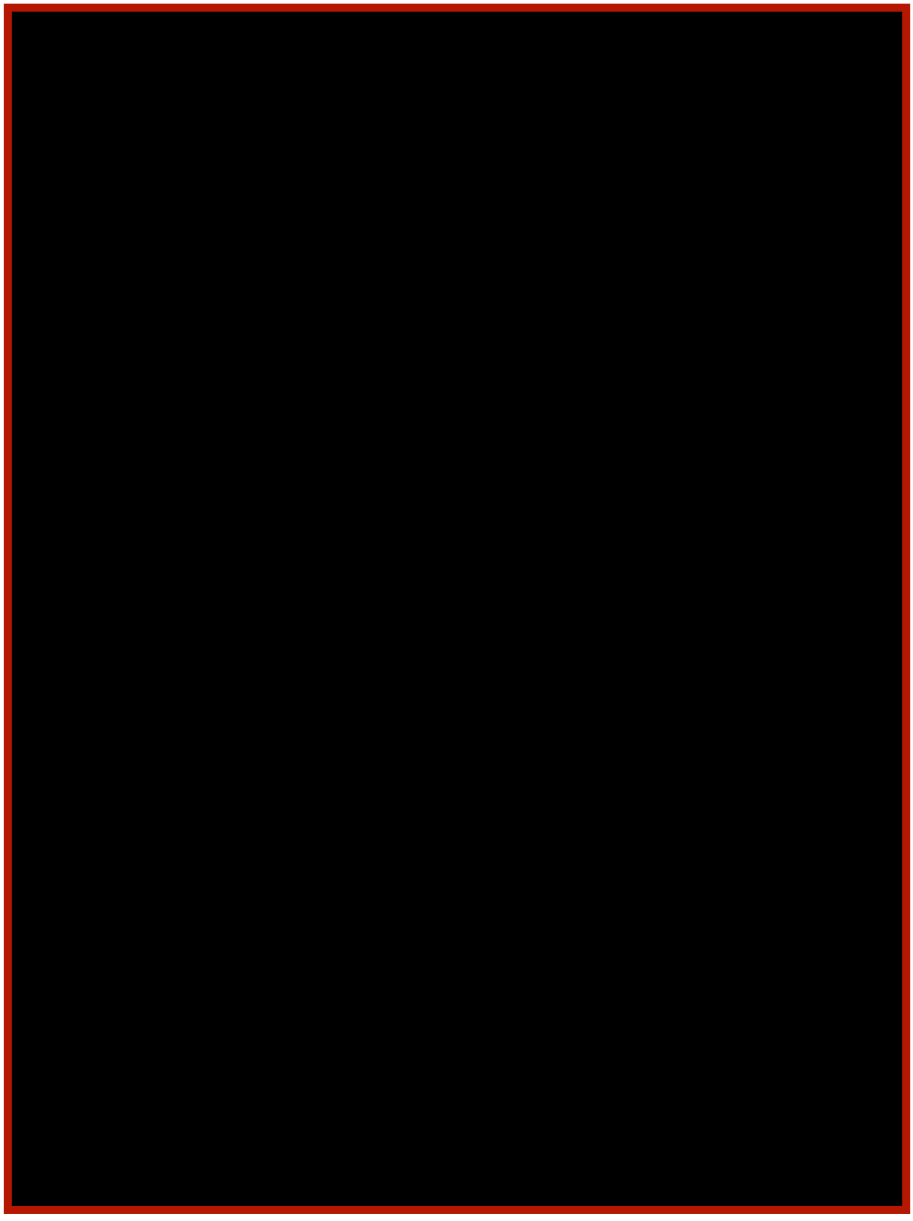
"Well, I'll drive you to school if you will show me 'the way," said the little girl.



So the blacksmith hitched January to the pretty little yellow pony cart and the little girl got in, and Peter hopped in beside her, and away they went trotting over the road until they came to the saw-mill.

Peter thanked the little girl over and over again for her kindness in bringing him back, and the last she saw of him was the tip end of his little white tail as he ran under the pile of logs.

Miss Hannah Hare and all the scholars were anxiously awaiting Peter. Miss Hare thought at first she really must punish Peter for going into the, wood, but when he told her about Mr. Oliver Owl, and the little boys who wanted to make believe he was a lion or a

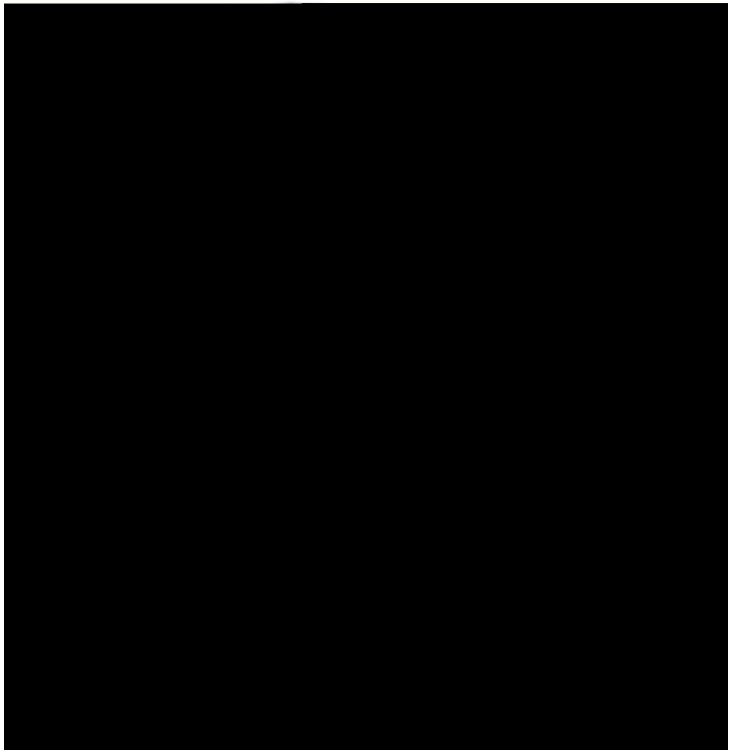


bear, and about the funny blacksmith, and January, and the kind little girl, she did not have the heart to punish him.

When school was dismissed that afternoon Peter stole up to Miss Hannah Hare and whispered a promise in her ear. And the promise was that never, never, never again would he run off into the wood.

Then the bell rang, and the pupils shouted and jumped, as children will shout and jump when school is dismissed, and away they all went scampering happily homeward, at least all except Ducky Daddies, who remained behind to tell Miss Hannah Hare that Peter was entirely too venturesome.

THE
END



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Gunston Classics

LINDA ALMOND
USA
1881-1987

PETER RABBITS' BIRTHDAY

PETER RABBIT AND LITTLE WHITE RABBIT

WHEN PETER RABBIT WENT TO SCHOOL

PETER RABBIT'S EASTER

PETER RABBIT AND THE OLD WITCH WOMAN

WHEN PETER RABBIT WENT A-FISHING

PETER RABITS' WEDDING